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ABSTRACT

Today's students must be aware of local, regional, national, and international issues, problems, situations, and cultural diversities. This paper presents curriculum ideas for involving elementary and secondary students in classroom inquiry processes and in field-based settings in order to teach them to think critically, make decisions, act, and evaluate. A variety of teachers' roles are explained in relationship to students' knowledge levels and include the following: (1) director of learning; (2) facilitator of learning; (3) resource to students; (4) monitor of student progress; and (5) developer of instructional units. A global culture instructional unit, with a focus on Asian cultures and a cross-cultural matrix, is described, and examples are presented that involve each of the teacher roles. Future goals of teacher education programs in preparing teachers for these various roles are proposed. Charts and 29 references are included. (JHP)

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TEACHER ROLES IN THE PROCESS OF CRITICAL THINKING/DECISION MAKING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Richard Peters, Ed.D.
THOUGHT/ACTION NETWORK

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Peters is experienced in K-12 social studies curriculum development and instruction as a classroom teacher, department chairman, district-wide curriculum coordinator, and supervisor of teacher inservice training.

Dr. Peters has conducted curriculum development research at The Florida State University laboratory school, has supervised student teachers at The University of Rochester, and is currently Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education at The University of Maine/Presque Isle.

In 1987, Dr. Peters founded the THOUGHT/ACTION NETWORK to promote critical thinking and decision making skills development among students across the K-12 curriculum.

Today, students must not only be aware of local, regional, and national issues/problems/situations but they must also understand the nature and character of international issues/problems/situations which have impact upon our individual and collective lives; irregardless of where we live, what we do in our daily lives, and what our political preference(s) might be.

> Technological advances, increased trade, tourism and cultural exchanges, environmental concerns, competition for markets and scarce resources, and the continuing arms race are drawing nations and peoples into increasingly complex relationships. Increased human interactions across national and continental boundries increase the potential for both cooperation and conflict. The day-to-day lives of average citizens, as well as the destinies of nations, are being influenced by our growing international, cross-cultural links. 1

Because we live in a global age, every student must recognize this fact and be systematically introduced to cultural diversity on an international scale.

Before they can comprehend far-distant natural and social environmental characteristics and phenomena, students must be formally introduced to local phenomena

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1 National Council for the Social Studies, 1981

and cultural diversities. As a result of this foundation, transference of knowledge and insights can be made to an international study of natural and social environments.

The environment outside the school should be seen as a laboratory wherein students can inquire, ponder, and act; a place where knowledge and skills are enriched, issues are clarified, and perceptions are honed.

For example, students in grades five through eight (5-8) can be directly involved in the inquiry process and function as researching social scientists in classroom and field-based settings.

GRADE 5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS (local)

⊙ Character/Nature

- Geography
- Topography
- Geology

⊙ Resources

GRADE 6 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS (local)

⊙ Character/Nature

- Population Density/Distribution
- Zoning
- Industrialization/Economy
- Services
- Historical Development
- Geography of Rural/Urban Areas

GRADE 7 NATURAL/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS: INTERACTION
(local, national, international)

⊙ Human Adaptation to the Natural Lifespace

⊙ Human influence(s) Upon the Natural Lifespace

⊙ Land Use/Land Use Planning

⊙ Resources Management

⊙ Cultural Development

GRADE 8 NATURAL/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS: INTERDEPENDENCE
(local, national, international)

- Reforestation
- Protection of Wildlife/Management
- Open Areas
- Clean Air and Water
- Resources Protection/Management
- Food Chain Protection/Management
- Photosynthesis Process re An Ample Oxygen Supply

A proactive student is an individual who applies, reinforces, and refines acquired concepts/knowledge/skills within the context of classroom and field-based instruction.

The student becomes an active participant in nis/her own learning, and is provided diverse opportunities to inquire, to ponder, to think critically, to make decisions, to act, and evaluate.

In this process, the classroom teacher plays a variety of roles.

(1) Whenever students are introduced to new concepts/knowledge/skills, there is a need for teacher-directed learning. The

teacher creates STRUCTURED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTs (SLEs), identifies measurable goals and objectives, and designs instructional activities/ experiences for students which result in concepts/knowledge/skills acquisition as a result of drill, repetition, and application.

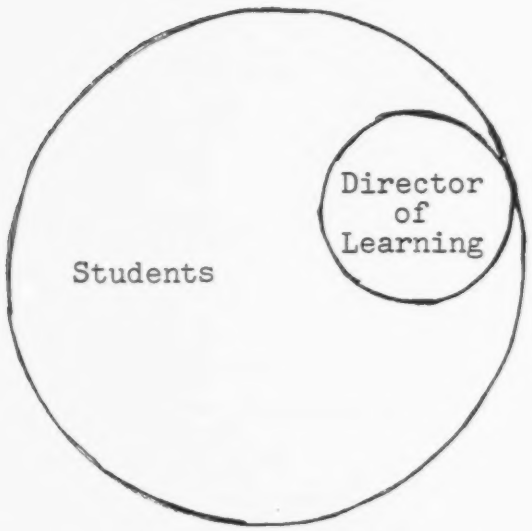


DIAGRAM I STRUCTURED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

(2) When basic data and skills have been acquired, students move onward-and-upward to the second stage of the critical thinking/decision making schema. Students assume a degree of responsibility for their own learning, and are involved in activities/experiences of their own choice, from among alternatives designed by the teacher/facilitator, which will directly involve them in discovery/inquiry processes. In these SIMULATED EXPERIENCE ENVIRONMENTs (SEEs), an emphasis is placed on concepts/knowledge/skills application, reinforcement, and refinement.

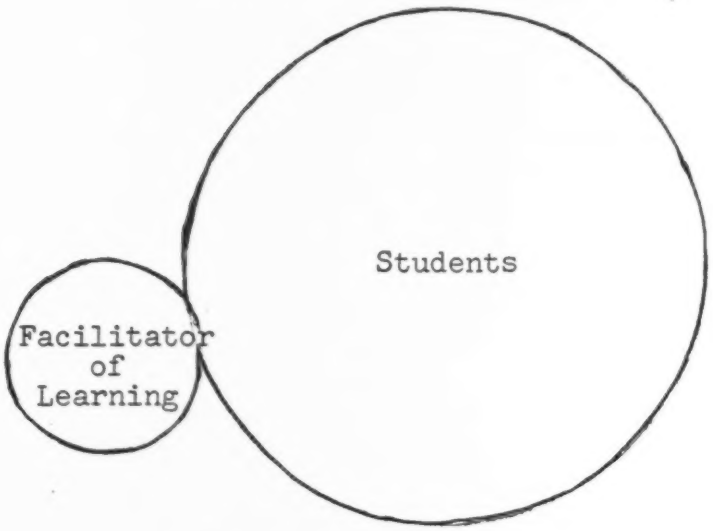


DIAGRAM II SIMULATED EXPERIENCE ENVIRONMENT

(3) At the third stage of the critical thinking/ decision making schema (INQUIRY EXPERIENCE ENVIRONMENTs), students assume an even-greater responsibility for their own learning, and become totally involved in further concepts/ knowledge/skills acquisition, application, reinforcement, and refinement. The teacher functions as a resource to learners and as a learning process monitor. He/she provides direction and technical assistance to students, upon their request, and conducts the on-going assessment of goals/objectives attainment progress by students.

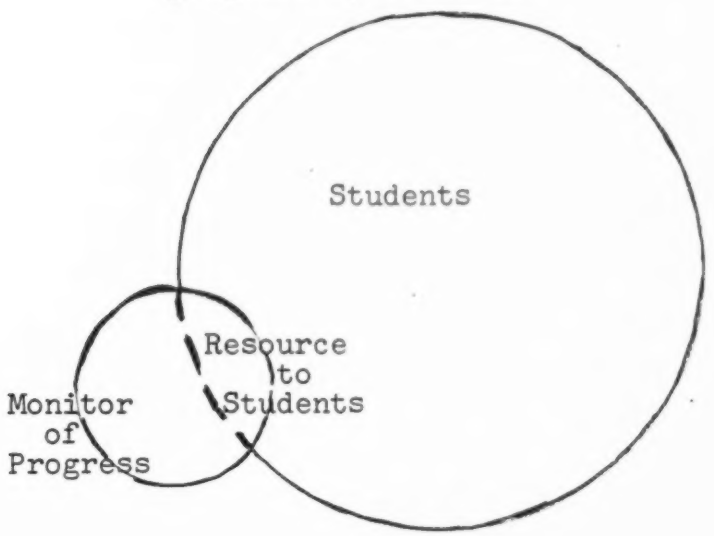
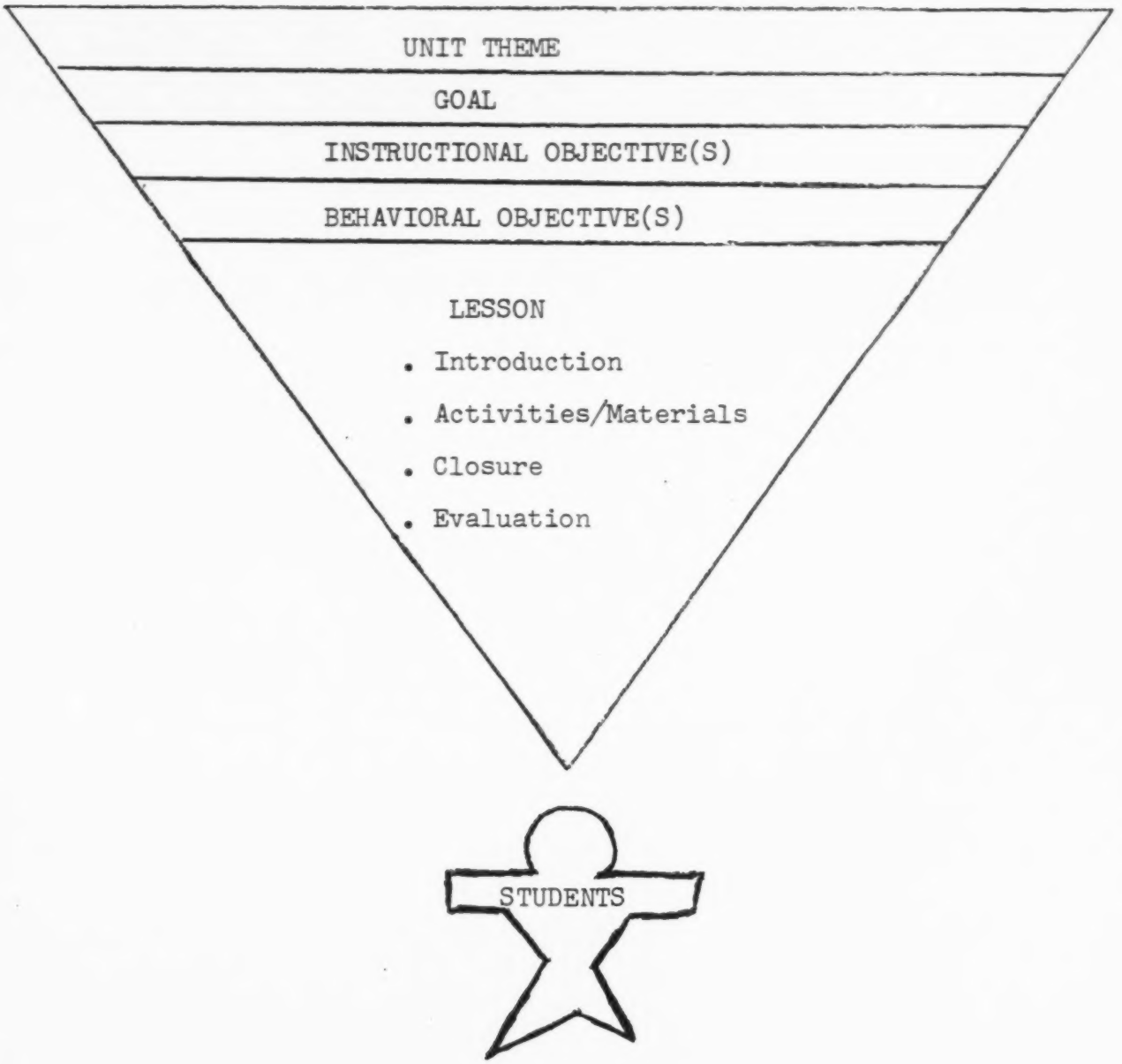


DIAGRAM III INQUIRY EXPERIENCE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to being a director of learning, a facilitator of learning, a resource to students, and a monitor of student progress, the teacher also functions as a developer of instructional units: culture studies.



UNIT THEME — A broad-based area of study.

TOPIC — A subdivision of the unit theme.

GOAL — An expectation held of students as a result of formalized study.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE(S) — What students will know as a result of their inquiry/study.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE(S) — Specific ways by which students will demonstrate what they have learned in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills domains.

LESSON(S) — The organization of concepts/knowledge/skills to be taught and learned in either a classroom or field-based environment.

- INTRODUCTION — Focusing student attention on what is to be studied, how it will be studied, and why it is being studied.
- ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS — Prescribed ways by which students will inquire/learn and the instructional hardware/software that will be used in the inquiry/learning process.
- CLOSURE — A culminating activity for purposes of summarizing the

	the inquiry/learning activities undertaken by students.
EVALUATION	Ways by which students will demonstrate learning in the cognitive, affective and/or psychomotor domains in structured/observable ways.

Culture study units can be designed to function in real life environments and/or to replicate real life in contrived (real-to-life) experience situations.

In real life environments, students can (for example):

- conduct community studies using the social environment as a learning laboratory;
- design research studies and collect data in its natural form;
- interview community resource people and record their comments/impressions on audio tape, video tape, and/or motion picture film;
- participate in field trips/tours to ethnic neighborhoods;

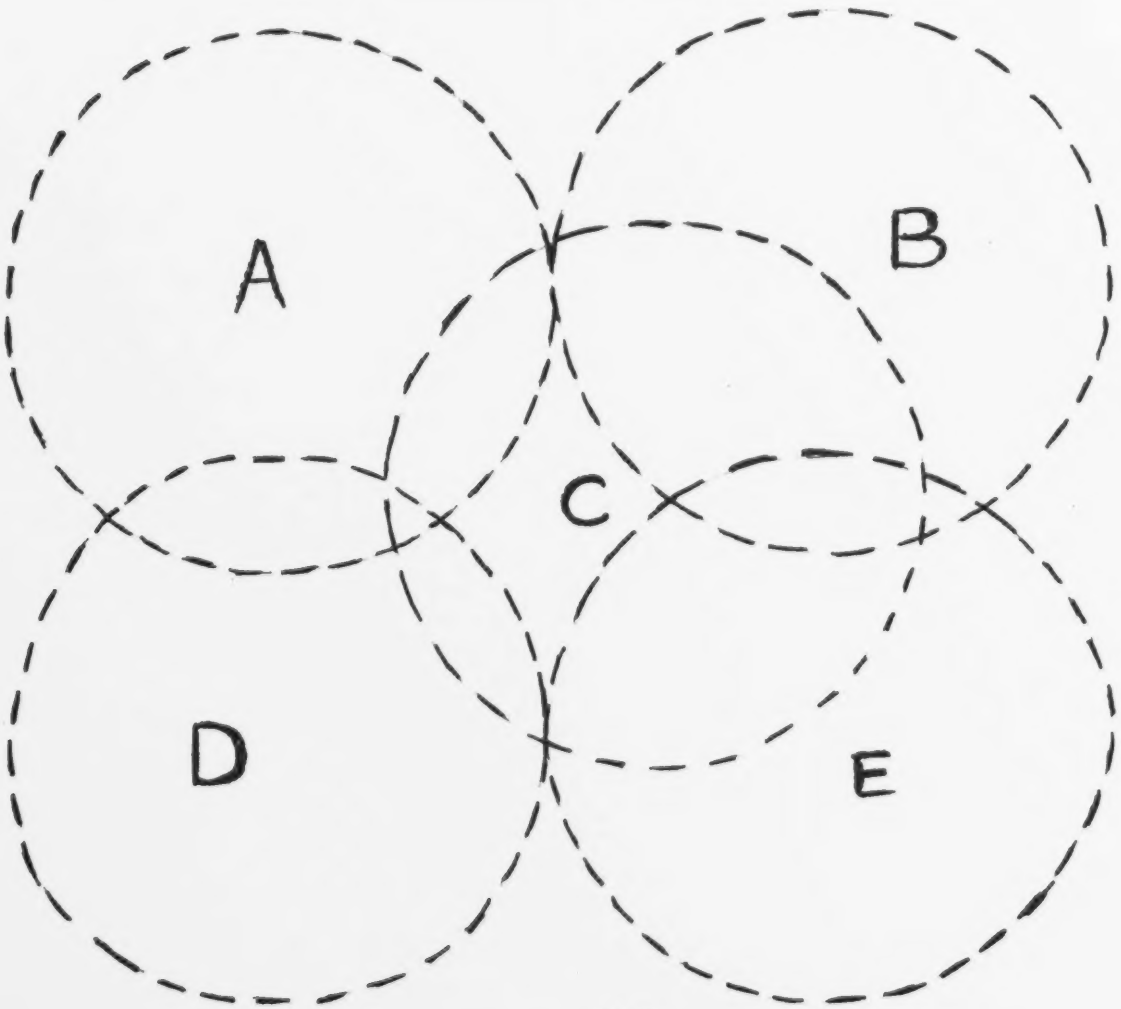
- interact with guest speakers in the classroom;
- visit art exhibits/museums to study the art of diverse cultures.

In real-to-life (contrived experience) situations, students can (for example):

- participate in role playing simulations;
- view films/video tapes/slides of real life situations;
- participate in game playing;
- recreate real life situations and participate in the re-enactment of real life events;
- interact with computer simulations.

What real life and real-to-life experiences do for students is to focus their attention, develop their awareness, and enhance their perceptions of issues/problems/situations. Thus, this EXPANDING PERCEPTIONS PHENOMENON (EPP) increases awareness of the lifespace and affects the conscious thought process.

One result of the EPP process is the cerebral patterning of interlocking/interacting worlds.



Students begin to perceive the several environments which constitute their total lifespace, and to understand the composition of the natural and social realms of those interlocking/interacting worlds.

It is the classroom teacher who provides students with diverse opportunities to explore, to comprehend, and to grow. Serving in several roles, the teacher organizes learning experiences, provides students with direction for learning, and works with them to achieve personal goals.

UNIT THEME	G L O B A L C U L T U R E S
TOPIC	CULTURES OF ASIA
GOAL	As a result of a study of Asian cultures, students will understand cultural differences/similarities.
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE	Students will know the cultural differences/similarities among/ between selected groups on the basis of identified culture traits.
BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES	Students will select three traits and compare two cultures in essay form. Students will list and explain the characteristics of any six (6) of the nine (9) culture traits discussed.
LESSON(S) 3 Days	Students will compare the cultures of the People's Republic of China, Japan, and South Korea (from 1800 to present) in order to understand each culture, and why there are on-going conflicts between the traditional ways-of-life in each nation and the process of westernization.
INTRODUCTION	Students will be introduced to the parallel development of the People's Republic of China, Japan, and South Korea from 1800 to present.

Each nation will be located on a large wall map of Asia, and the concepts: PROXIMITY and SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS will be discussed.

Wars that have taken place between these nations will be discussed. Why has Japan had designs on taking over the PRC and South Korea in the past?

ACTIVITIES/ MATERIALS

Students will locate the PRC, Japan, and South Korea on desk top maps.

Students will collect culture trait data on one of the 3 nations assigned to them. Data will be collected on Culture Trait forms provided by the teacher.

Students will make a wall map size Cross-Culture Matrix and use it as a basis for their comparative studies.

Students will view films/ filmstrips/videos re each culture.

Students will develop individual and small group reports.

CLOSURE — The teacher will summarize the 3 day activities and the culture trait comparisons made by students.

EVALUATION — Students will take an examination.

Students will submit their group reports.

Students will submit their research data and sources.

Students will write a position paper re the culture they think has undergone the most change since 1800.

As a director of learning, the teacher introduces students to nine culture traits which will be used as a basis for comparing diverse social groups. The characteristics of each trait are identified.

Food/Clothing/Shelter

Industrialization/Economic Development

Religion

Social Status/Roles

Government/Rule

Family

Tools/Weapons

Customs

Arts/Music/Literature

As a facilitator of learning, the teacher provides a variety of individual/small group activities for students, and identifies the instructional materials necessary for them to undertake their studies.

As a resource to students, the teacher collects books, maps, audiovisual materials for student use.

As a monitor of learning progress, the teacher oversees student activities and observes what is being done by individuals and in groups.

As an evaluator of learning, the teacher designs test items/instruments to measure learning progress, and assesses the products of students' labor.

CULTURE TRAITS

CULTURES	Food Clothing Shelter	Industrialization Economic Development	Religion	Social Status Social Roles	Government Rule	Family	Tools Weapons	Customs
A								
B								
C								

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CROSS-CULTURE MATRIX

How can students be systematically introduced to the character of diverse cultures while, at the same time, developing an understanding of the differences and similarities among culture groups?

A CROSS-CULTURE MATRIX IS AN INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL USED BY STUDENTS TO VISUALLY COMPARE THE CHARACTERISTICS/TRAITS OF DIVERSE CULTURES.

How can students be actively involved in the discovery process?

STUDENTS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN COLLECTING DATA FOR PLACEMENT ON THE MATRIX. USING DATA CARDS PROVIDED BY THE TEACHER, STUDENTS RESEARCH THEIR SPECIFIC CULTURE TRAIT(S) AND COLLECT RELEVANT FACTS AND STATISTICS. If the 3'x5' matrix is printed on cloth, the data cards are attached to it with velcro backings. If the matrix is printed on wood or paper, magnets are attached to both the matrix and the cards.

TOMORROW'S TEACHERS

How do we prepare future teachers to instruct public school students in international education/culture studies?

How can we be sure that classroom teachers possess the abilities, knowledge, and skills needed to properly lead students from a level of awareness to exposure, interaction, and understanding?

What kind of experiences must preservice teacher trainees have, today, in order to properly prepare them for the challenges of teaching international education/culture studies, tomorrow?

Being proactive, we want to make certain that trainees understand the several roles that the typical teacher plays in the student's learning process both in the classroom and in field-based environments.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

Teacher training programs must demand active student participation in the learning process. Trainees must be involved with an instructional program designed to instill

concepts, knowledge, and skills through involvement with real-life and real-to-life experiences.

The expanding environments approach to lifespace awareness employed in the teaching of global education (K-12) should be applied to teacher training programs at the post-secondary level - in modified form.

It is necessary that the international education/culture studies teacher trainee be exposed to concepts/knowledge/skills in anthropology, economics, environmental studies, foreign language(s), geography, geology, national/world history, political science, natural sciences, sociology, psychology, and the arts, and have opportunities to apply, enrich, reinforce, and refine this learning in the total lifespace environment.

Teacher trainees should interact with individuals from diverse cultures and international groups and organizations.

In the classroom, trainees can be exposed, directly, to guest speakers and presenters. They can also view

audiovisual materials which will provide knowledge and insights as well as stimulate inquiry. Instructional strategies should be designed so as to insure trainees opportunities to acquire specified teaching skills, to develop a familiarity with diverse instructional hardware/software, and to have chances to apply their learning and insights in community-based (public school) classrooms as well as hone their abilities in simulated, microteaching scenarios which are videotaped and critiqued.

In the field, trainees should interact with diverse cultures and peoples as a result of visits to ethnic communities, foreign travel and study, volunteer work with agencies and programs of an international nature/scope, career placement with international organizations for up to one academic year, participation in the activities of international conferences and conventions, and membership on committees dealing with international issues as well as membership in professional organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS).

STATEMENT

IF it is important for elementary/secondary students to know that:

- what happens in one part of the world will have impact on the rest of the world because of cultural, historical, and economic ties.
- people of the world all face problems of survival, of providing for their basic needs in a situation of expanding population and diminishing resources.
- people are motivated by the things they value; the things that people hold dear differ from group-to-group.
- people of the world vary in their ways of doing things (many times the same things), because they were brought up to perceive, think, feel, and to act in accordance with their own culture.
- nations of the world who have limited resources may find it difficult to accept the fact that other nations have much wealth.

- people love their countries and their own languages.
- each of the peoples of the world have contributed and continues to contribute to world culture.
- we have many links with other people of the earth. [2]

THEN it is important for elementary/secondary school teachers to focus attention on the ways in which people, internationally, carry out nine basic human activities:

- protecting/conserving life and resources.
- producing, exchanging, and consuming goods and services.
- transporting goods and people.
- communicating facts, ideas, and feelings.
- providing education.
- providing recreation.
- organizing and governing.
- expressing aesthetic and spiritual impulses.
- creating new tools, technics, and institutions. [3]

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[2] Maxine Dunfee. SOCIAL STUDIES FOR THE REAL WORLD. pgs 137-138

[3] P.R. Hanna, "Revising the Social Studies," SOCIAL EDUCATION, 27, pgs. 190-196, 1963

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